

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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"KING OF THE WILD WEST"

A Sergeant of Roosevelt's Rough Riders on the Cattle Range

By J. Edward Leithead

In 1904, Street & Smith started publishing a weekly devoted to cowboy life, the only dime or nickel library specializing in stories of ranch and cattle range. At first called "The Young Rough Riders Weekly," its title was later changed to "Rough Rider Weekly. The Best Wild West Stories Published." It should have been very popular, yet it ran to only 175 numbers, and to-day copies are scarce.

Ted Strong, hero of the series, had seen service in the Philippines as a sergeant with Colonel Theodore Roosevelt's celebrated "Rough Riders." The idea of military man and cattleman combined was a good one. Ted had inherited a cattle ranch in the Black Hills of Dakota from his grandfather. The first story opens with a letter from Ted to Ben Tremont, a good-natured, lazy giant and once famous college athlete, who had been in Ted's cavalry troop in the Spanish-American War. Ben, then in New York, was invited to come West and help Ted fight for his "Black Mountain Ranch," to which a slick Eastern lawyer named Rossiter laid claim, principally because gold was discovered on the ranch-land.

Kit Summers, another member of Ted Strong's Rough Rider troop in the war, fiery-tempered and wealthy, had already established himself and a crowd of Eastern boys on a cattle ranch not far from Black Mountain. The boys were a likeable bunch, each with marked characteristics. There was

Thaddeus Perkins, called "Beanpole," who, though sound as a dollar, imagined himself suffering from many ailments. "Doc" Fenton, a former drug-store clerk was forever prescribing remedies (which he knew nothing about) for this hypochondriac. Joseph Durkin fancied himself an actor and was always quoting Shakespeare with variations. Jack Slate had a supposed Boston accent, Carl Schwartz was fat and usually in hot water, Bob Martin was small and dapper, Clay Whipple was a fiddle-playing young Kentuckian. Most of these characters lasted throughout the series.

Bud Morgan, next in importance to Ted Strong, deserves a paragraph of his own. He was a genuine cowpuncher, a little older than the rest, wore his yellow hair long and was sometimes referred to as "Goldilocks." Bud's favorite expression was "Jump-in' sandhills!" and he supplied most of the humor in the weekly. He had a fund of tall tales about his experiences "down on the Pecos," not intending that anyone should believe them. It usually drew groans or caustic comment from big Ben Tremont when Bud began spinning one of these yarns.

Then there was Stella Fosdick, the girl pard, but more about Stella at the place where she entered the series.

Sheriff Roaring Bill Reynolds, of Crook County, had established himself in Ted's Black Mountain Ranch, working for Lawyer Rossiter. Nicknamed "Roaring Bill," actually he was soft-spoken, but deadly, his idea of law and order being to let the desperado element do as it pleased. Crowfoot Bill and Cheyenne Dick, a half-

breed, were his able lieutenants

When Ted Strong, on arriving in Crook City, near the Black Mountain Ranch, discovered the lawless state of the country and that he would have to fight for his property, he organized Kit Summers and his crowd into a half-military outfit, the "Young Rough Riders." Ted was captain, Ben came in, and Bud Morgan, after helping Ted recover the saddle horses stolen from the Summers ranch, became Strong's right-hand man. He remained so to the last story published, a memorable character of the old nickel libraries.

Lawyer Rossiter and his confederate, Sheriff Reynolds, lost out in their fight to keep Ted from rightful possession of Black Mountain Ranch, and the Summers outfit moved in with Ted. Rossiter had a son, Earl, a vindictive enemy of Strong's. And Earl, after buying an outfit called "Sunset Ranch," carried on the fight with the Black Mountain "Rough Riders." His cousin, Louise Rossiter, a beautiful girl with none of the lawyer's or Earl's streak of meanness, supplied romantic interest in many of the early stories. She and Ted liked each other immensely, and a couple of other girls, Kate Lamont and Daisy Miller, were introduced to heighten the love interest. Ted Strong, good-looking, good rider, roper, and expert with guns, was a man's man who was also attractive to women. This helped to make Earl Rossiter, admirer of Louise, a good hater.

St. George Rathborne probably was the author of the early Rough Rider stories. "Sunset Ranch," a cloth-bound book issued in two different editions, by Street & Smith and David McKay, and signed by St. George Rathborne, is written in similar style. Also, "Sunset Ranch" was the name of the outfit owned by Earl Rossiter, although the book of that title had nothing whatever to do with the Rough Rider Weekly characters. There were two others in the cloth-bound series by Rathborne, "The Young Range Riders" and "Chums of the Prairie." He wrote Buffalo Bill, Jesse James and Dalton Boys stories for Street & Smith's Log Cabin Library, and Pawnee Bill stories for their Nugget and New York Five Cent Libraries, all published under pen names. So, it seems probable he gave the "Young Rough Riders" their fine start as a

nickel library. He showed a wide knowledge of cowboys, cattle and range life in general. The stories were different from anything previously published in "dime novels" about the cattle-raising West, and possibly the first works of fiction to pay attention to cowboy songs. "Get Along, Little Dogies" and other range ballads appeared in the early issues, Bud Morgan doing most of the singing.

For thirty-seven issues the stories dealt mainly with adventures in the Black Hills country, fighting Roaring Bill's rustlers, fighting the Sioux under Chief Frosthead (a friend of Roaring Bill's), and opening the gold mine on Ted's land. A contest of cowboy sports was held between the Black Mountain and Sunset Ranches, in which Rossiter's outfit—this was a radical departure from the old formula of the hero always winning—came out on top, partly through superiority, partly skulduggery. Even the game and seasoned Bud lost the roping contest to a Mexican vaquero, was thrown in the bucking horse event. Ted was beaten at steer-tying when a "rogue" steer was turned loose by the Rossiter bunch; but Ted's ready gun saved the girl spectators when the steer charged the stands.

Besides these Black Hills adventures, the Rough Riders made trips into the Southwest to buy Texas cattle, hunted Ladinos (wild stock) in the chaparral, got lost in the desert, battled bad men, took part in a land rush. They drove a beef herd to the Blackfoot Agency in Montana, nearly losing the herd to rustlers, and later trailed their fall beef cut through Nebraska to Kansas City. They had adventures in Missouri, in Indiana, and wound up in Chicago.

All of these stories were by the same author, St. George Rathborne, and he probably wrote many above #37 as well. Eugene T. Sawyer also authored some of them, as did George C. Jenks and W. Bert Foster, later on, although the pen name "Ned Taylor" was used from beginning to end of the series.

From #38 to 73, the Young Rough Riders were away from the Black Mountain Ranch a great deal, adventuring in other parts of the West. In #74, "Ted Strong's Luck," the Black Mountain herd is thrown on the trail to seek better pasture and water. Af-

ter a long drive it comes to Moon Valley, meeting the opposition of one Bill Jeskit, who doesn't want anyone else in the territory. Ted befriends White Bull, the Indian owner of Moon Valley, who eventually gives the Rough Riders a lifelong lease on the fine grazing there. From that point onward in the series, much of the action takes place at Moon Valley Ranch, new home of the Rough Riders.

It became a much larger ranch than the old Black Mountain, Ted hiring a crew of cowpunchers to look after the stock in addition to the original Rough Rider outfit. He and Bud and the other regulars, while fighting to clean up a cowtown on the railroad near Moon Valley—named Strongburg in Ted's honor—were appointed deputy United States marshals, and through all the remaining stories they retained these deputy marshalships.

#77 was "Ted Strong's Wild West Show," which he put on to celebrate the elevation of a college-bred Indian. Braveheart, to the chieftaincy of his renegade father's clan, and also to advertise Moon Valley Ranch to outsiders. This number contains a fine description of an old-time rodeo and frontier day exhibition. Bud Morgan was in his glory with a lot of old saddlemates from the Southwest, who had come to take part.

#79 was entitled "Ted Strong, King of the Wild West" (this was the story of the fight for Strongburg), and thereafter the titles always began, "King of the Wild West." Since Frank Tousey's Wild West Weekly, with Young Wild West for its hero, had been doing well since 1902, possibly it was thought that including the magnetic phrase, "Wild West," in the titles would be helpful to Rough Rider Weekly circulation. The stories were so uniformly good, it seems that nothing more was needed to make them popular. Yet "King of the Wild West" was an attractive title and fitted Ted Strong pretty well.

Besides running the Moon Valley Ranch, the Rough Riders found time to go after wolves preying on cattle in Montana, to hunt wild horses, round up bad men and rustlers, seek treasure on land and under the sea, engage in a sheep war, and find a lost city in the mountains of Colorado. Bank and train robbers were meat for the Rough Riders, too.

In #102, King of the Wild West's Haunt, Stella Fosdick, range-raised daughter of a Texas cattleman and suddenly left an orphan, enters the scene. Legally her guardian was her uncle, Walter Graham, a Colorado sheep rancher, but the Rough Riders adopted her—she was their girl perd. She went wherever they did, dragging along her aunt as companion. Mrs. Graham didn't always want to go, but Stella wouldn't be refused.

Stella Fosdick was to Rough Rider Weekly what Arietta Murdock was to Wild West Weekly, one of its foremost characters, who got her name on the cover in every sub-title from #104 (and once before that, in #102) to the end. Stella and Arietta were the outstanding heroines of Western nickel libraries. And the various Street & Smith artists, particularly Marmaduke Russell, saw to it that Stella was an eye-filler. She was the only member of Strong's Rough Riders who didn't wear khaki. With blonde hair rippling on her shoulders, topped off with a high-crowned white Stetson, a bolero jacket, red skirt and white leggings—and a gun on her hip—Stella was a charming cowgirl and appeared as regularly as Ted on the covers above #100.

Those cover illustrations of Rough Rider Weekly were something to talk about, too, particularly from #79 to the end. Several drawn by Marmaduke Russell, depicting cattle stampedes, were in a class by themselves. A few of the earliest Rough Rider covers were reproduced as covers for early issues of Street & Smith's Western Story Magazine.

In the spring of 1906, Street & Smith ran ads in the back pages of their five-cent libraries offering free a set of six post cards, in color, of Ted Strong on his Rough Riders, to "every boy who will write and tell us what he thinks of No. 102 of Rough Rider Weekly, entitled, 'King of the Wild West's Haunt; or, Stella's Escape from Sacrifice.'" A similar ad was run at the same time, giving away a set of half a dozen colored post cards of Frank and Dick Merriwell and other Tip Top characters.

October 1st, 1906, the publishers opened a "Grand Letter Competition" for Rough Rider Weekly, which closed Ap-

ril 1st, 1907, when a second contest started. For the best letters, \$100 in gold was offered, \$20.00 being the first prize. The response to these competitions was large and enthusiastic, judging by the letters, from all parts of the country, afterward printed in a "Chat Column" at the back of the weekly. And the wonder is that this really fine series didn't continue much longer than it did with so many loyal supporters. A lot of them were also readers of Tip Top Weekly.

John H. Whitson, George C. Jenks and W. Bert Foster were doing an excellent writing job under the pen-name, "Ned Taylor," spoken of by the publishers as "Our Cowboy Author." Nick Carter appeared in #153, "King of the Wild West's Message from A-far," and some characters of the early Rough Rider stories were revived: Earl Rossiter, his father and Louise Rossiter. The author made a slight error in calling Louise the sister of Earl—she was his cousin. Earl, once the bitter enemy of Ted, at first appears to have reformed, but soon shows the old cloven-hoof, and in the end has to flee to Brazil. As an aid to realism, the author (probably Whitson), has Louise say to Ted, meeting him after several years have passed: "I bought one of the books that are written about you, on the train, and it told all about your being at Moon Valley." She was referring, of course, to Rough Rider Weekly itself. Carrier pigeons figure in this story, bringing a message to Ted from Louise, describing the place where she is held captive.

Nick Carter appeared again in #156, "King of the Wild West's Long Dry Drive" (story by George C. Jenks, cover by Marmaduke Russell), and in one or two other Rough Rider tales, Ted returning the compliment by an appearance with Bud Morgan in Nick Carter Weekly.

Special mention should be made of Colonel Fothergill and "Cow" Suggs, veteran cattlemen of Moon Valley, who were great boosters for Ted and his outfit. On one occasion, the Rough Riders visited Colonel Zack Miller at the famous Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch in Oklahoma, and there is a good description of a beef issue at an Indian agency in #151, "King of the Wild West at the Lone Tree." Once Ted went to the Klondike, #100, "King of

the Wild West's Meteor" (fine cover picture of him driving a dog-team in the snow), and in #101 we find him in Siberia.

In #159, "King of the Wild West's Bronco Ball Tossers," baseball, as the title indicates, was introduced at Moon Valley, and Ted's cowboy nine played the ball clubs formed by other cattle outfits. The Rough Rider team also played a Sioux Indian nine of Carlisle graduates. In one of these baseball stories, #165, "King of the Wild West's Unique Ball Team," the game was played on horseback. Stella appeared on the coach line and also umpired a game.

In #170, "King of the Wild West's Cattle War," Ted purchased a new ranch, the Two Bar, in Montana, where his presence was resented by a bad outfit that wanted the Two Bar. But the Rough Riders showed 'em! This story, and the five following it, winding up the series, were all by W. Bert Foster, and yarns of the cattle country with one exception, #172, "King of the Wild West's Winged Witch," wasn't a ranch but a desert story, with bandits and a kidnapping, Stella playing an unusual role. In the last number, Ted sells the Two Bar Ranch and the Rough Riders return to Moon Valley.

Rough Rider Weekly itself never had any reprints, but the series from #1 to 155 was reprinted at intervals in New Medal Library, leaving out #33 to 37 and 152. In some of these books the Rough Riders were called the "Broncho Boys," though otherwise the stories were unchanged. After New Medal ceased publication, the same Rough Rider tales, #1 to 155 (again excluding #33 through 37, and 152), were re-issued in the 15-cent Western Story Library, comprising a set of 43 numbers.

In 1927, the publishers issued Rough Rider Weekly #156 to 175 (which hadn't been reprinted before) in this Western Story Library, continuing the series with #44 and running it up to #70. George C. Jenks, of "Diamond Dick" fame, wrote some new stories for the Library at this time. In #50, "Ten Strong's Great Round-up," containing reprints of Rough Rider Weekly #174 and 175, Jenks filled in with a third story to make up the volume. Possibly he authored all the stories

from #51 to 61; #62 apparently reprinted Wild West Weekly #2, 3 and 4, Wild and his friends being metamorphosed into Ted and his friends. There may have been more Young Wild West stories used after that. At any rate, when the last reprint from Rough Rider Weekly had appeared, the old "Rough Rider" flavor, the stuff that made Ted Strong "King of the Wild West," was lacking.

BOOKS FOR THE CAMP FIRE "The Redpath Novels"

By Rev. Roland D. Sawyer

I wonder if any of our collectors have run into any of the "Redpath Novels" of 1864, called "THE CAMP-FIRE BOOKS."

Beadle's Salmon covered stories in 1860, they were small enough to slip into the pocket, and they became immensely popular with the soldiers in the south.

Families back home who would send some of Beadle's would be sure to please the soldiers at the front.

In January 1864, James Redpath put out a series called BOOKS FOR THE CAMP FIRE, and which he announced would be of higher literary quality than the other various series of Dime Books being published and sent to the soldiers.

The books ran 96 to 124 pages and were paper bound, sold for a dime.

I have seen but one copy, that had good type and fine paper was used. The covers were green.

The first story was by Louisa M. Alcott, the title being "ON PICKET DUTY and OTHER TALES."

No. 2 was "CLOTELLE, A TALE OF THE SOUTH." No. 3 was "THE VENDETTA," one of Balzac's stories. No. 4 was "GULLIVER'S TRAVELS," (this is the cover I once had). No. 5 was Victor Hugo's "BATTLE OF WATERLOO."

James Redpath was of Boston where they were published.

Charles B. Richardson of New York, was during the Civil War publishing two magazines, which evidently did not receive a large circulation, I have never seen but one or two copies.

One was THE MILITARY SERVICE MAGAZINE, which cost \$5.00 a year.

The other was THE HISTORICAL MAGAZINE, a magazine devoted to antiquarian, local history, and American biographical items.

Mary E. Nauman was the sister of Mr. Nauman, a prominent lawyer of Lancaster, whose home was near Ann and East King St.—a drab brick structure surrounded by pleasant gardens. The house has since been torn down and a Christian Scientist church erected on the site. I have but a dim remembrance of Mrs. Robinson, who was Mary E. Nauman. When I was a little boy she resided at the corner of a small street, just above Lime St., on East King St. It was a plain brick structure with flowers growing in the windows. She was called "Twisted Threads" by many of the residents of Lancaster on account of her first book entitled "Twisted Threads." My only knowledge of her literary output is the book "Twisted Thrads" and another Guy Promise. She worshipped at the Episcopal Church of St. James, in whose graveyard some of the Naumans are buried. They were a distinguished and respected family. Mrs. Robinson was charitable and often contributed generously to the Catholic Church (St. Mary's) by reading palms of the visitors to fairs and bazaars. She was much skilled in palmistry. I have a dim remembrance that she married a military man—a captain or a lieutenant.

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Don Brewer of Stroudsburg, Pa., Box 165 has been very sick for some time. Says he has some novels for sale, so get a letter off to him pronto.

Floyd Beagle has short article on novels, and a picture of himself in the January 1949 issue of The Brakevine, entitled "Divisions Publication Provides Chance Meeting of Boyhood Pals."

Be on the lookout fellows, for "Market for Murder," by Frank Gruber, in Penquin 25c Pocket Mystery Books # 651. Mentions a lot about Malaeska in various sections of the book, also Frank Reade, Tip Tops, Old Cap Colliers and others, also Charles Bragin of Brooklyn, and it's very interesting too.

Who has ever heard of the Red Mask Library that runs stories on Sexton Blake, and is published in Chicago, Ill. Any information will be appreciated, or any of them for sale.

We are all a quiver, over the coming out of Prof. Albert Johannsen's two books on the "House of Beadle & Adams dime & nickel novels, out May 15th, 2 vols., boxed, illust. Price \$15.00 for both. Pub. by University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla.

Harry B. McConnell, Cadiz, Ohio, is getting up a book on his 62 years in the office of the Cadiz Republican and his life in Cadiz, which will be a sort of composite life of a boy growing to manhood in a middle west county seat town, and life of same. They had a bank robbery of \$260.00 in 1886 and his two uncles back from the Civil War, captured them, as a part of a squad in their pursuit — a thrilling story, and then there is a story of Morgan's Raid through there in 1863, also the County Fair, the Tippecanoe and Tyler Too campaign, some very interesting characters, printing office experiences, a "walk along a real main street," describing unusual occurrences that have happened in each house passed, a county bibliography of over 250 books that have been written about the community, and people living in it, high spots, a boy of yesterday and today, Lincoln's tomb and many other things, also the "hidden name," card period of 1883-1900. Anyone having advertisements of "hidden name cards," ads in various mags of that time, in Comfort, and others, write to Brother McConnell, also ads of firms in Cadiz advertising such cards, etc.

Other Fellows Job (Evening Gazette) Queer thing, but we always think every other man's job is easier than our own. And the better he does it, the easier it looks.

Please correct Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth's death date, it should be she died in 1899 instead of 1897. See Roundup #192, Sept. 1948. Herman Pitcher sent in the right correction.

Charlotte M. Breame (Bertha M. Clay) died Nov. 25th, 1884.

F. M. Lupton who published cheap love stories in Arm Chair Library died in October, 1910.

Collector Magazine Projected (want list) a monthly magazine for book collectors tentatively entitled the Book

Collector Monthly is planned by the members of The Dime Novel Club, it is reported by Charles Bragin. Mr. Bragin aims to reach the average collector.

Say fellers, what kind of stories would you like to see in Roundup, and what length, long, short, serials or what Pards, let me know, as I want to please every one I can.

Wm. H. Gander says they are having the worst winter they've ever had, up in Manitoba, Canada. Lou Kohrt of Houston, Texas, says they had snow for the first time, Feb. 6th, since 1895. It snowed all day, and young and old were out to enjoy it. B. D. Mallery of Culbertson, Nebr., says it's a very mild winter there, but they are having it hard up the north part of the state. Frisco Eert Couch says they had snow on Christmas day, the first time on record, so the old world must be changing around, or some thing.

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81, 83 to 90, 93, 94, 95, 97 to 103, 115,
124, 125, 126, 169.

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- Descriptive Key to the painting of the Repulse of Longstreet's Assault at the
Battle of Gettysburg (July 3, 1863). Pub. by J. B. Bachelder in 1870. Fine
condition. Bound and illustrated. 94 pages, size 6x9 inches. Has map bound
in with it. Price 50c.
- Back copies of Linn's Weekly Stamp News, 12 for \$1 or \$7 per 100 asst. 1935 up.
Jesse James Manhunter 60c Jesse James Thrilling Raid 60c
- 408 Wings cigarette cards in good condition for \$20.00, a nice buy for some one.
25 copies of Tip Top Weekly and others without covers, 15c ea., or \$2.50 for all.
- Wilkes Spirit of the Times, on sports, the stage, turf, etc. Apr. 21st 1860-Nov. 22
1862, Sept. 7 and Dec. 28, 1867, fair to fine shape, the lot, for \$1.00.
- Who's Who in America, Vol. 13, 1924-25, price \$2.00.
- Queen of the Stage, by Alan Dale, 1896. Paper wrappers, good. Illust. \$1.00.
- True Blue #39—\$1.00. Golden Library #49, lightly stamped, fair—\$1.00

Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.

WANTED!

BOOKS by Horatio Alger Jr.

- 1 Victor Vane
- 2 The Young Bank Messenger
- 3 The Odds Against Him
- 4 Tony The Tramp
- 5 Five Hundred Dollars
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- 11 Wait and Win
- 12 Striving for Fortune
- 13 Ben's Nugget
- 14 In Search of Treasure
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- 16 Mark Manning's Mission
- 17 Work and Win
- 18 The Young Book Agent
- 19 Seeking His Fortune
- 20 Tony The Hero
- 21 Abraham Lincoln, the Backwoods Boy
- 22 Dan The Detective
- 23 The \$500 Check
- 24 Walter Griffith
- 25 A Rolling Stone
- 26 Forging Ahead
- 27 Finding A Fortune
- 28 Henel Ford

All must be CLOTH BOUND

When answering please give Title, Publisher, and price expected. Will answer all letters promptly.

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